

The only paper in the British Empire devoted solely to the interests of Magicians, Jugglers, Hand Shadowists, Ventriloquists, Lightning Cartoonists and Speciality Entertainers.

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PROF. AHMAD, Court Magician.



The Magician of the month is an Eastern representative of the Mystic Art, not as practised by the Fakir who is supposed to be able to vanish himself by way of a rope thrown in the air, then to cause the rope to disappear in the same direction, or like absurd imaginations—but representative of the art as practised by the magician of the Western World.

Prof. Ahmad was born at Charkhari (Central India) on the 23rd October, 1865. His father is a district magistrate in the state. The professor has two brothers who also practise magic, though not exactly as we understand it; in their case it is the magic of healing, the one being a doctor of medicine, and the other a veterinary surgeon.

While not, apparently, inheriting a tendency to dabble in things mysterious, the subject of our sketch has possessed a fancy for the same from the time he discovered the sovereign in his first portion of Christmas pudding. This quickly led to his possessing an irresistible desire to pass other people's money into hot rolls, buns, &c., and their watches into cakes or loaves of bread. The mania for presenting these bewildering surprises never left him, the result being that, at the age of twenty-three, after finishing his ordinary education, he commenced his extraordinary education, labouring diligently to obtain a thorough mastery over the art of Sleight of Hand. Needless to say, he was successful, and after giving a number of performances of a quasi-important nature, for the purpose of attaining the necessary stage presence, he gave his first regular performance before His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor of North West Provinces in 1890.

Prof. Ahmad's parents and friends, according to the prevailing notions of India, were, at the outset, dead against his becoming a conjurer, but, as he says himself, "I gave no ear to the hue and cry of my country, that a

magistrate's son was about to become a magician, and adhered to my intention. Result, I got what I wanted, a good name and a golden hat."

Prof. Ahmad is acknowledged by experts to be most proficient in Sleight of Hand, not being surpassed, and rarely equalled in his manipulation of Coins, Cards, Billiard Balls and the like; it is generally understood amongst magicians that the greatest tricks ever performed are not done at all, the audience simply think they see them—to produce such "illusion" requires the most consummate skill, and it is in the ability to thus misdirect an audience that Prof. Ahmad excels.

The seances of this clever artist have been confined, almost exclusively, to the drawing-room; but on the occasion of public performances the press has been most liberal in its praise. The highest tribute to his skill is shown at the private tests, the expression of bewilderment upon the faces of the audience, as a great effect is followed by others of a more startling nature is the strongest possible testimonial.

In view of the elegant apparatus and stage fit-up, which adds many charms to his skilful manipulation, we are not surprised to learn that he is patronized by the *élite* of society and that he is the recipient of numerous press and private testimonials, and as evidenced by the well gotten-up circular, which we are pleased to add to the "MAGIC" collection.

Prof. Ahmad travels much, and has given his entertainment in many foreign countries. He is familiar with many Indian *Jadoo*, tricks which are absolutely bewildering, and also buys the latest ideas in magic and illusions from England and America. He also plays what he terms "a most wonderful music" by a particular vein in his neck, not yet shown in other countries. His patter is pleasing, and his work has been much appreciated by Lord Curzon, Baron of Kedleston, Viceroy and Governor General of India. He has also some 400 testimonials from Indian Princes and British officers with reference to his ability as a clever entertainer.

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By ELLIS STANYON.

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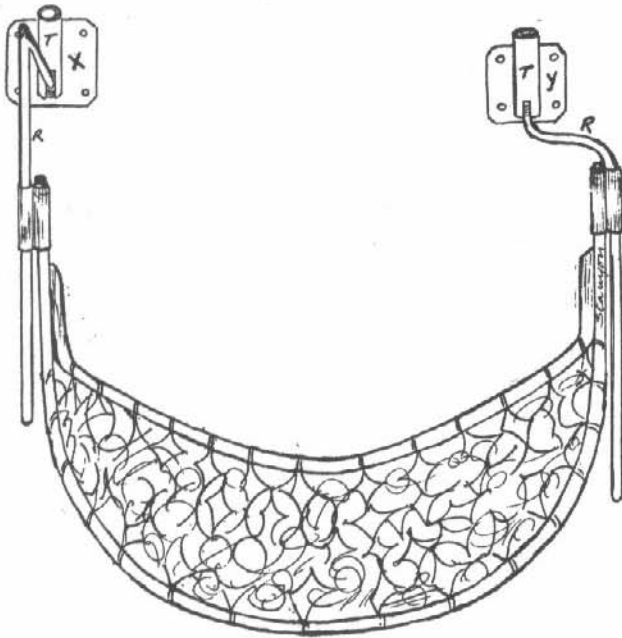
Folding and Telescopic Servante.—This practical novelty may be seen at the office of "Magic" in working order and duly attached to a table. The illustration

FIG. 13.

(Fig. 13) practically explains everything. The metal work is in stout brass wire, with network attachment as shown. "X" and "Y" are two square plates with holes for screwing the *servante* to the under side of the table. The tubes "T" each contain a coiled spring which, when the *servante* is not in use, holds the rod rigid in the slot of the tube "T" as seen at "X." When not in use the rods "R" may be withdrawn from the slot as seen at "Y," and folded flush with the table top. The *servante* proper works in and out on the rods "R" as indicated in the Fig. This is, doubtless, the best *servante* for card and billiard ball work yet invented.

A Novel Trick with Cards.

By E. T. SACHS, author of "Sleight of Hand."

Mr. E. T. Sachs sends us the following sleight, or rather, combination of sleights. It is peculiarly adaptable to the amateur card manipulator, performing in a drawing room.

"This little trick calls for the use of the single-handed pass ('Sleight of Hand,' figs. 28-30) and the slide (Fig. 39). The cards are held ready for the pass in the left hand, face upwards and attention called to the name of the visible card—say eight of clubs. The pack is then placed upon the table, face downwards, the pass having been executed on the way there. The eight of clubs supposed to be at the bottom, is therefore now near the centre of the pack. It will be noticed that invariably there is a slight break where the pass has been made, this revealing the new position of the eight of clubs. Remove these upper cards, carefully including the one next below the eight, and, holding the cards ready for the slide, show the bottom card—say the ace of hearts, saying, 'here, on the table, I place the ace of hearts, please place your hand upon it, &c.,' turn the cards over and by means of the slide, place on the table the eight, leaving the ace still at the bottom. Immediately re-join the two halves of the pack by lifting the lower half from the table, and hand the whole to a spectator, making the two-handed pass on the way, however, the ace being thus brought to the bottom. Calling attention to the supposed state of affairs, the two cards are made to change places. I leave it to the performer to continue the mystification by means of the change and palm to show that the two cards are one and the same, and so on."

The Mysterious Coin.

By JOHN N. HILLIARD.

This is essentially a table, or impromptu trick, but my magical friends who will take the trouble to master it, will find it a welcome addition to their repertoire of coin effects. By the way, there is a scarcity of good coin tricks. The minds of the inventors seem to run more or less to card effects. The following experiment has the advantage of combining sleight of hand with absolutely no preparation.

Effect: A handkerchief (unprepared) is spread on the table. Four coins are laid on the handkerchief so as to form the corners of a square. Two of the coins are covered with small squares of paper. The four coins eventually come together under one of the papers. No duplicate coins are used, and the four coins may be borrowed and marked.

Explanation: Coins are placed on handkerchief on table as follows:—

A, B, C and D are the four marked coins. It enhances the effect to use a handkerchief of a dark color, as the silver coins show up better by the contrast. Now exhibit two squares of rather thick paper—the quality paper used for magazine covers is the proper thickness. These squares of paper should measure about four inches by four. Holding a square in each hand, and showing his hand otherwise empty, the magician covers the coins marked A and B. Observing that by covering these two coins, the other two coins are visible, he quickly shifts papers so as to cover the coins C and D, observing at the same time that the two front coins are visible. The performer shifts papers again and covers A and B, and while talking to the audience, and also looking straight at them, the fingers of the right hand (under cover of the paper) pick up coin B. This movement, it must be understood, is made without moving the paper, nor should there be the slightest visible movement of the right hand. The sleight will be facilitated if the right thumb presses down on the left edge of coin, which slightly tilts the right edge of coin into the finger tips.

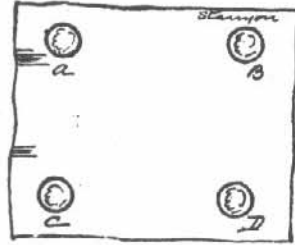


FIG. 14.

Now comes the crucial move of the trick. It is not a difficult move, and if made properly, the whole operation is covered. While the right hand holds coin B under the paper, the left hand removes paper from coin A, and holds it squarely in front of the right hand. Under cover of this paper, the right hand carries paper and coin away, and as the right hand moves away, the paper in left hand is allowed to fall on table, where coin B is supposed to lie. The right hand moves over to the left side of the table, and in the act of covering coin A with paper, the coin in right hand is laid on table near A. Of course, you must not let coin B clink against coin A in this operation. At this stage of the experiment, you have two coins under the paper at A, although your audience believe that there is one coin under each of the papers.

Now for the second part of the trick. Grasp lower left hand corner of handkerchief with left hand, *fingers well underneath and thumb above*. Take coin C in fingers of right hand. Hold it up high, so that all may see that you hold a coin in your right hand. Left hand lifts up corner of handkerchief and right hand carries coin under the handkerchief and apparently pushes it toward front of table until it comes under the paper at A. A slight return movement is made with the fingers of the right hand, there is an audible clink of two coins coming together, and removing his right hand from beneath the handkerchief, and showing it unmistakably empty, back and front, performer, daintily picks up paper at A, and exhibits the two coins. If these movements are made as described, and the clink of the coins is audible, the effect to the audience is as if you placed a coin under the handkerchief and that it really passed through the cloth and joined the coin already under the paper. Of course it did no such thing. As you passed the right hand with coin C under the handkerchief, you allowed the coin to remain between the first and second fingers of the left hand. There must be no hesitation in the execution of

this movement. The right hand must transfer the coin to the left without pausing the fraction of a second, and the fingers of the right hand, held as though they contained the coin, pushing slowly forward until they are under the paper cover at A. Now, if an upward movement is made with the fingers, one of the coins will be thrown on to the other, causing the illusive clink.

Right hand is now withdrawn and lifts paper cover. At the same moment left hand, holding coin between first and second fingers, releases handkerchief and takes cover from right hand. The coin is now concealed under paper in left hand. Left hand replaces paper cover over the two coins, adding the third coin, being careful not to allow the coin to clink as it is released from the fingers. As there are three coins now under paper at A, the process is repeated with coin D. When the paper in left hand is placed over the coins at A for the last time, there are four coins under the cover, although the audience are convinced that there are only three, they are of the opinion that there is still one coin under the right hand cover at B. In order to pass the coin B (apparently) under the paper at A you must vary the procedure. Simply bend over and blow briskly under the paper at B. The effect is as if you blew B under the paper at A. Lift up this paper and show the four marked coins together. This trick, unlike most of sleight of hand effects, admits of repetition before the same audience. The second method differs slightly from the first, and after you have performed it the second time the audience will be more mystified than ever.

In the second method you use five coins instead of four, but of course the audience is unaware of the existence of the extra coin. Conceal the fifth coin in left hand, and arrange the four coins as before. In laying the papers over A and B you do not take away B, as in the first method, but allow the extra coin in left hand to join the coin at A. The trick now proceeds as before, except after passing the last coin, B, under the handkerchief you must get rid of it in some manner. It is easy enough to slip the coin into the pocket while lifting up the paper at A, because all eyes are attracted to the four coins. I have been at some pains to describe this trick in detail, because it is really worth the attention of the most fastidious sleight of hand artist. It is simple in theory, but the amateur will discover that it must be worked with a delicacy of touch, and with breezy patter, in which case the illusion produced is perfect, and if the two methods are used, the effect is really incomprehensible. Don't make the fatal mistake of presenting this trick without the requisite amount of practice, or you will regret your temerity.

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"And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's guid watch o'er them."

THE VANISHING RICE.

By PROFESSOR HOFFMANN.

This is a trick of Japanese origin. It is too quickly over to be suitable for independent exhibition, but it forms a capital introduction to the familiar "rice-bowls," or any other trick in which rice plays a part.

In effect it is as follows:—The performer, first drawing up his sleeves, takes a handful of the rice, and pours it two or three times from hand to hand. Presently he brings the hands together, palm to palm, and rubs them gently one against the other. When they are again separated, the rice has vanished. Once more they are brought together, gently rubbed, and the right hand closed. A plate or a sheet of paper is held underneath, when the missing rice pours from the hand upon it.

The secret lies in the use of a little bag, about 1¾ inches square, preferably of flesh-coloured silk, and closed at the mouth (after the fashion of the bag used for producing sweets from a handkerchief) with a couple of pieces of clock spring or whalebone, in such manner that the mouth is normally kept shut, but is opened when pressure is applied to the opposite ends of the springs. This is suspended, by a gut loop, round the forefinger of the right hand, so as to hang, mouth upwards, midway between the first and fourth fingers. The attachment of the loop should be at the centre of the mouth, on the side which in use lies next the palm.

With this preliminary explanation, the working of the trick will be almost self-evident. The bag being duly looped over the finger, the performer takes up with the same hand a table-spoonful or so of the rice, and pours it once or twice from the one hand to the other. At first this is done, so to speak, anyhow, so long as the inside of the right hand is not exposed; but when the rice is being poured back from the left hand for the second time, the right hand receives it after a particular manner, viz. : the hand is held fistwise, thumb uppermost, with the fingers partially closed; the space between the thumb and the curved fingers forming a sort of cup. This position of the hand enables the performer to exercise the needful pressure on the ends of the springs. The mouth of the bag opens, and it is into this that the rice is actually poured. The pressure being relaxed, the bag closes. The hands are brought together; the little bag is tilted over to the back of the right hand, and both palms are shown empty. In the act of again bringing the hands together, the bag is tilted once more into the palm, and the rice may be reproduced as above described.

The trick has the advantage of being very little known. The only element which I can claim as my own is the use of the loop to suspend the bag; but it seems to me that this is a very material improvement. In the original version the bag is merely palmed, and consequently both hands cannot be shown absolutely empty.

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The performer next stands up, and taking a chair, a light one for preference, makes a few passes over it, seemingly to mesmerize it, and, while doing this, puts one leg behind the black thread. The chair then follows the performer about the room in the most mysterious manner.

He next asks anyone to sit on the chair, and upon a person doing so he is apparently subjected to a violent shock of electricity, for he jumps up quick and seems very much alarmed. This latter effect is produced in the most simple manner. Performer simply whispers to the person, as he seats him in the chair, the words "Jump up quick," and the person, entering into the spirit of the thing, does the rest. This should be repeated several times, then the chair should be put on one side, and another brought forward *in which the person can sit*.

The Flying Penny.—The effect of this surprising little trick is as follows:—You borrow a penny and place it in the left hand; then make the action of throwing it in the air, and it vanishes entirely.

The borrowed coin is not really placed in the left hand; it is retained *secretly* in the right hand. The coin shown in the left hand, and which is supposed to be the borrowed one, is attached to cord elastic passing up the sleeve, and fixed at the shoulder or to the brace. When the coin has passed up the sleeve, the original one (remaining in the right hand) may be found in any desired place,—under a flower pot, from amongst flowers in a vase, &c., &c.

The *fac simile* reproduction of Mons. Robin's Poster on next page (date 1857) has been selected from Mr. Margery's Portfolio. This portfolio, we might add, is not by any means exhausted, although we have issued a *fac simile* in nearly every copy of "MAGIC," going on for five years; so our readers who are interested in the historical and biographical departments of conjuring may still look to "MAGIC" for information. Other rare and interesting full page *fac similes* will appear in this vol.

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